



U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

*Senator Wayne Allard, Chairman
Legislative Branch Subcommittee*

PRESS RELEASE

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SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SENATOR WAYNE ALLARD OPENING STATEMENT ON CAPITOL VISITORS CENTER HEARING

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- U.S. Senator Wayne Allard (R-Colorado) made the following statement Tuesday at a hearing of the Senate Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee:

We meet today to take testimony from the Architect of the Capitol Alan Hantman and the Comptroller General David Walker on the progress of the Capitol Visitor Center.

As Chairman of the Legislative Branch Subcommittee, I intend to monitor progress of this critical project closely to ensure the Architect is doing all in his power to finish this project in a timely and cost-effective fashion.

While the AOC met a major milestone of ensuring the East front plaza was in sufficient condition to accommodate the requirements of the 2005 inaugural, we are a long way from completion of this project. It is at least 20 months behind the original schedule and many dollars over the 2002 budget which included new security requirements and the expansion space.

The budget and schedule for this 580,000-square foot underground facility have been concerns for at least 3 years. Today's hearing will focus on getting further clarification on the budget and schedule. There are many other CVC-related issues, particularly those associated with the operation of the Visitor Center, but we will save those for another day.

We have asked the Comptroller General to testify today as the Government Accountability Office has been monitoring the project closely from the start. We will first hear the Architect's opening statement, followed by Mr. Walker's, and then we will have 5-minute rounds of questions.